

Grade Seven History and Social Sciences

Civics and Economics

The standards for seventh-grade students cover the role of the citizen in the American political and economic systems. The focus is on gaining essential knowledge of the U.S. and Virginia Constitutions and the structure and functions of government institutions at the national, state, and local levels. Students also learn the basic principles, structure, and operation of the American economy. These standards are intended to foster patriotism, respect for the law, a sense of civic duty, and informed economic decision making. Social science skill development extends into quantitative data organization and interpretation.

- 7.1 The student will compare the Charters of the Virginia Company of London, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitutions of the United States and Virginia, as amended, with emphasis on their treatment of
- fundamental political principles including constitutionalism and limited government, rule of law, democracy and republicanism, sovereignty, consent of the governed, separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism; and
 - fundamental liberties, rights, and values including religion, speech, press, assembly and petition, due process, equality under the law, individual worth and dignity, majority rule and minority rights, etc.
- 7.2 The student will compare the national, state, and local governments, with emphasis on
- their structures, functions, and powers;
 - the election and appointment of officials;
 - the division and sharing of powers among levels of government;
 - the separation and sharing of powers within levels of government; and
 - the process of amending the United States and Virginia Constitutions.
- 7.3 The student will compare the election process at the local, state, and national levels of government, with emphasis on
- nomination and promotion of candidates for elective office;
 - similarities and differences between the major political parties;
 - voter turnout;
 - evaluating accuracy of campaign advertising; and
 - distinguishing between reporting, analysis, and editorializing in the media, and recognition of bias.
- 7.4 The student will compare the policy-making process at the local, state, and national levels of government, with emphasis on
- the basic law-making process within the respective legislative bodies;
 - the interaction between the chief executives and the legislative bodies;
 - the functions of departments, agencies, and regulatory bodies;
 - the roles of political parties at the state and national levels;
 - the ways that individuals and cultural, ethnic, and other interest groups can influence government policymakers; and
 - the impact of the media on public opinion and policymakers.
- 7.5 The student will distinguish between the judicial systems established by the Virginia and United States Constitutions, with emphasis on
- the organization and jurisdiction of Virginia and United States courts;
 - the exercise of the power of judicial review;
 - the process of bringing and resolving criminal and civil cases in Virginia's judicial system; and
 - the function and process of the juvenile justice system in Virginia.
- 7.6 The student will explain the structure and operation of the United States economy as compared with other economies, with emphasis on
- the basic concepts of free market, as described by Adam Smith, and of communism, as described by Karl Marx;
 - the concepts of supply and demand, scarcity, choices, trade-offs, private ownership, incentives, consumer sovereignty, markets, and competition;

- private and public financial institutions;
 - the economic impact of consumption, saving and investment, and borrowing by individuals, firms, and governments; and
 - the differences between free market, centrally planned, and mixed economies.
- 7.7 The student will describe the role of governments in the United States economy, with emphasis on
- provision of public goods and services;
 - protection of consumer rights, contracts, and property rights;
 - the impact of government taxation, borrowing, and spending on individuals and on the production and distribution of goods and services; and
 - the role of the Federal Reserve System and the impact of monetary policy on the money supply and interest rates.
- 7.8 The student will compare the American political and economic system to systems of other nations, including Japan, China, and leading Western European nations, in terms of
- governmental structures and powers;
 - the degree of governmental control over the economy; and
 - entrepreneurship, productivity, and standards of living.
- 7.9 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in America by
- describing ways individuals participate in the political process, such as registering and voting, communicating with government officials, participating in political campaigns, serving on juries and in voluntary appointed positions;
 - describing and evaluating common forms of credit, savings, investments, purchases, contractual agreements, warranties, and guarantees; and
 - analyzing career opportunities, in terms of individual abilities, skills, and education, and the changing supply and demand for those skills in the economy.
- 7.10 The student will interpret maps, tables, diagrams, charts, political cartoons, and basic indicators of economic performance (gross domestic product, consumer price index, productivity, index of leading economic indicators, etc.) for understanding of economic and political issues.